

Education resource

# Myall CREEK AND BEYOND

The Myall Creek Massacre education resource contains information that students and teachers may find distressing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this resource contains names of deceased persons.

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## *Myall Creek and Beyond education resource*

Ngarrabul Elder, Adele Chapman-Burgess from Glenn-Innes, NSW has compiled this education resource to communicate and educate primary and secondary school students on the people affected by this massacre and what was happening in Australia in the events leading up to and following the Myall Creek Massacre. Throughout this education resource are reproductions of artwork from artists in the exhibition *Myall Creek and Beyond* produced in 2018 at The New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale, New South Wales.

*Myall Creek and beyond* exhibition view, NERAM, 2018

## Teachers notes

The Myall Creek and Beyond education resource is designed for stage 1-6 (K-12 students), and covers a range of subject areas where themes of history, culture and art can be implemented. Various Australian curriculum requirements are also addressed, such as 4 of the 7 general capabilities that teachers must foster in students, and the cross-curriculum priority, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories', which will be our main curriculum focus.

### Learning areas

A study of this material would be useful for a variety of Australian Curriculum Key Learning Areas (KLA) in Primary and Secondary sectors, such as English, Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) and Creative Arts.

Specific subjects within these key learning areas where the education kit could be applied:

**Primary:** Aboriginal Languages, English, Creative Arts, Geography and History

**Secondary:** Aboriginal Studies/Languages, English, Geography, History, Drama, Visual Arts, Photography and Digital Media, Studies of Religion and Legal Studies.



#### Further information

Refer to the Australian curriculum:  
[australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://australiancurriculum.edu.au)



### General capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities

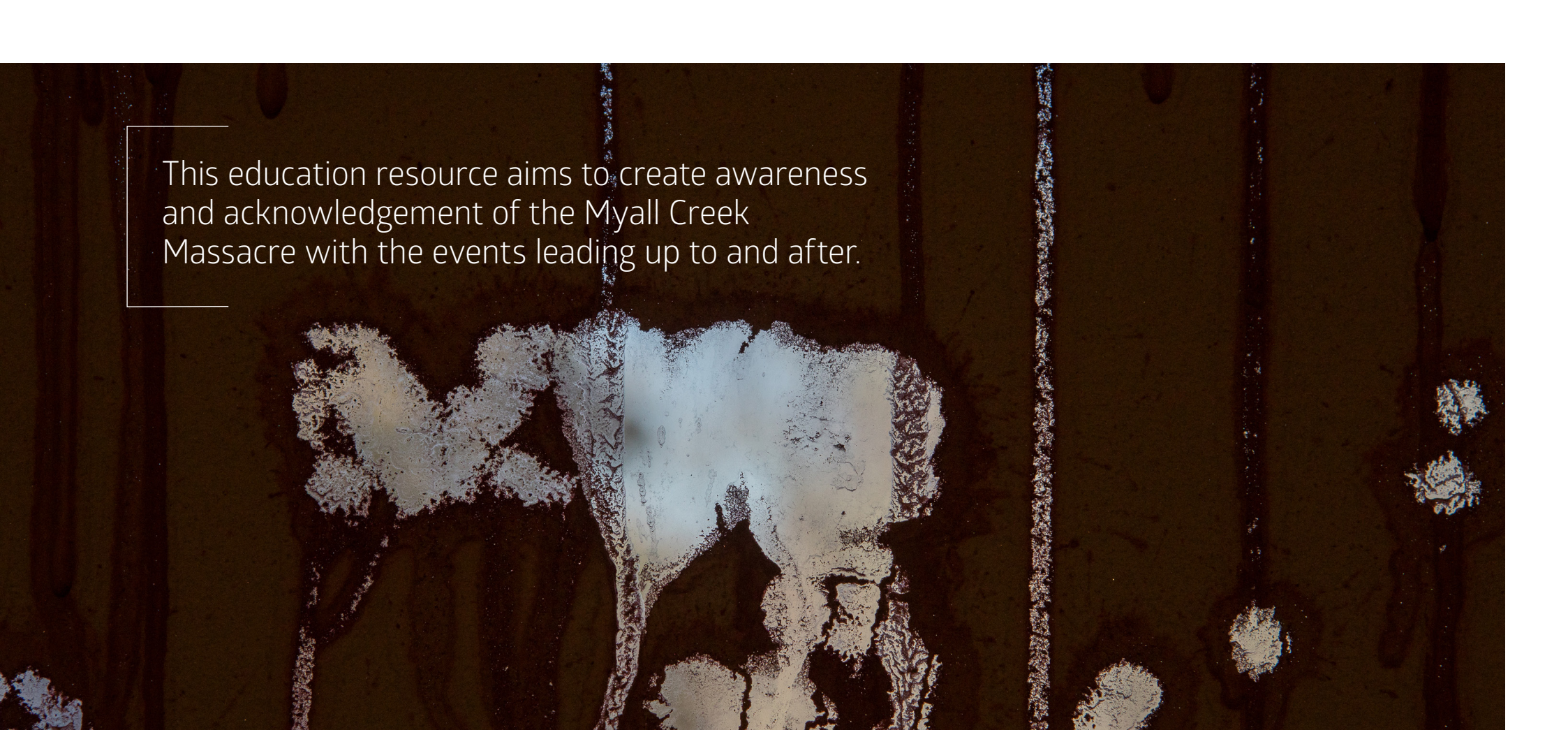
By applying this teaching resource to your pedagogical practice, elements of the general capabilities will be fostered in students, such as 'Critical and Creative Thinking', 'Personal and Social Capabilities', 'Ethical Understanding' and 'Intercultural Understanding', developing knowledgeable citizens with ethical dispositions, outlooks and behaviours. The cross-curriculum priority, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories' is also addressed. Encouraging students to recognise, acknowledge and respect Indigenous culture and history prompting students to advocate for equality and reconciliation. Effectively 'closing the gap' that exists between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

Judy Watson, *Witness Tree*, 2018, video installation, muslin cloth, charcoal, ochre, gate posts

Video editor: Maria Barbagallo

Sound design: Greg Hooper

Cinematography: Judy Watson, Greg Hooper, Robert Andrew



This education resource aims to create awareness and acknowledgement of the Myall Creek Massacre with the events leading up to and after.

Robert Andrew, *Reveal* (detail), 2018, ochres, oxides, aluminium, acrylic, electro mechanical elements

## Acknowledgements

This education resource aims to create awareness and acknowledgement of the Myall Creek Massacre with the events leading up to and after. We would like to acknowledge the Gamilaraay people upon whose land the Myall Creek Massacre occurred. Murdered in the massacre were the Wirrayaraay people, an Indigenous tribe belonging to the Gamilaraay nation.

We would like to acknowledge the Anaiwan, Ngarrabul, and Gamilaraay peoples on whose lands this education resource was built and developed.



Judy Watson, *Myall Creek 1 – 28* (detail), 2018, charcoal and acrylic medium on watercolour paper

## Worksheets and resources provided

- Acknowledgement of Country activity sheet
- The Myall Creek Gathering Cloak Map
- National Heritage List, Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial
- Myall Creek Massacre - Reconciliation Past and Present Teacher Plan
- *The Myall Creek Massacre Its History, its memorial and the Opening Ceremony*, Ted Stubbins and Paulette Smith
- *The Myall Creek Massacre* by Len Payne
- 'A very bad business' Henry Dangar and the Myall Creek Massacre 1838, Lydall Ryan, University of Newcastle
- The characters of the Myall Creek story
- Letter from J.H Bannatyne
- Video of song 'We are here now', by Quarralia Knox, Radical Song and Tim Leha, 2018
- Poem 'The Aboriginal Mother' by Eliza Hamilton Dunlop December 1838
- Virtual Tour of Myall Creek Memorial: [vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/0/p/4](http://vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/0/p/4)

# Glossary

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:** The original inhabitants of Australia and surrounding islands.

**Aboriginal peoples:** The original inhabitants of mainland Australia.

**Gamilaraay Nation** is also known as Kamilaroi, Gamilaroi, Yuwaraay.

**Wirrayaraay People** are also known as Weraerai Wiraiarai, Weraiarai, Wirri-Wirri, Warlarai, Wolroi, Wollen, Waholari, Wolaroo, Walarai, Juwalarai, Walari, Wolaroi, Woolaroi, Ginniebal.

**Terra Nullius:** A Latin ideology meaning “land belonging to no one”.

**Colonisation:** The process of taking control of and settling another land/territory.

**Colonist:** An individual involved in the colonisation process. This includes both who chose to come to the new colony and those who were forced to do so (i.e. convicts).

**Reconciliation:** The action of making one view or belief compatible with another.

**Treaty:** A binding agreement between two or more states or sovereign powers. It is usually reached after a period of negotiation.

**Songlines:** Trace journeys of ancestral spirits as they created the land, providing knowledge, cultural values and wisdom to Indigenous people.

**Totem:** A natural object that is inherited by members of a clan or family as their spiritual emblem.

**Moiety:** Descent groups into which people are divided that coexist within a society.

**Freeman:** Not a slave.

**Stockman:** A person who looks after livestock on a station.

**Hutkeeper:** The person in charge of a hut.

**Defence:** In the court of law represents the person accused of the crime.

**The Crown:** In the court of law are responsible for examining police evidence, also known as prosecution.





Carol McGregor With Adele Chapman-Burgess, Avril Chapman and the community of the Myall Creek Gathering Cloak, *Myall Creek Gathering Cloak*, 2018, natural ochre, thread on possum skins

## The Myall Creek Massacre

On the afternoon of Sunday 10 June 1838, a group of twelve stockmen brutally slaughtered a group of twenty-eight Aboriginal men, women and children who were camped peacefully at the station of Myall Creek in the New England region of NSW, Australia.

Although there were many other massacres of Indigenous people occurring during the Frontier Wars across Australia, this event had special significance. It was the only time colonists were arrested, charged and hanged for the massacre of Aboriginal People following a police investigation.

The Myall Creek Massacre was extensively documented through the police investigation, court case and media coverage. So it cannot be denied. While justice was seen to be done in this case, it also sent a signal throughout the wider community that colonists could be brought to trial for killing Aboriginal peoples. However, we know that massacres continued to happen around Australia until the 1920s. Many of these were conducted in secrecy, but others were government sanctioned and undertaken by police and colonial government forces. Some people still deny their existence today...

## The Myall Creek Memorial

On 10th June 2000, the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial was unveiled as a unique reconciliation site and was added to the Commonwealth Government's National Heritage Register in 2008. Every June the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial organise a commemoration service attracting visitors from around Australia for a solemn event based upon acknowledging our joint history as an important step in the process of reconciliation.




## The Myall Creek Exhibition

To commemorate the 180<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Myall Creek Massacre the exhibition *Myall Creek and Beyond* began with a 5-day program of exhibitions, symposiums, and talks. Produced in partnership with the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial, *Myall Creek and Beyond* is an exhibition of newly commissioned and existing work by nine leading contemporary Indigenous artists.

Curated by Indigenous curator and artist Bianca Beetson, the project commissioned six Indigenous artists Judy Watson, Fiona Foley, Robert Andrew, Laurie Nilson, Carol McGregor and Warraba Weatherall to produce new work responsive to the history and site of Myall Creek. The exhibition also included existing works by Julie Gough, Colin Issacs, and Jolea Issacs. The artists worked with local communities to create new works for the exhibition to explore the issues and complexities of the Myall Creek massacre and its aftermath. The exhibition explores this difficult shared history to increase awareness and encourage discourse about these events and their continued impact on both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

The exhibition evolved out of a larger collaborative program, The Myall Creek Project. Cultural and community events included in the project aimed at building a profile of the Myall Creek Memorial as a vital site for reconciliation and to encourage participation in their annual commemoration.

*Myall Creek and beyond* exhibition view, NERAM, 2018



Art is a powerful medium to convey stories which transcend the spoken or written word, through its ability to capture the challenging, truthful, spiritual, metaphysical and unspoken essence of a story.

Bianca Beetson, Curator *Myall Creek Project*

# Foreword

## Precious memories from descendants of those who survived the massacre

As a young child I grew up listening to the Elders around the campfire who use to talk about the massacre. I was inquisitive and used to ask my parents and family about my great great grandparents. They used to speak in hush tones about how it all come about. Whenever they did there was always sorrow and sadness in their eyes. They spoke about how our great grandparents lived in fear. They didn't want to do anything because they were literally too fearful for their lives. But when seven of the eleven perpetrators brought to trial were hung and faced justice they felt free. They also talked about other friendly nearby station properties and their owners where the Munro family enjoyed close ties to land within our clan estate. As a young person I was conscious of the fact that they didn't tell you much because you only had to know certain things. However just growing up knowing this story has had a big impact on my life. My family use to visit the site for cultural reasons and show us where the massacre happened. Every time they did we were never allowed to ask the question I imagine would have been the most difficult to answer. Why? When I think about it I am sure that would have been the very question they had repeatedly asked themselves over the years.

In 1998 I met Pastor John Brown. In discussion with him and others including family members of those massacred and descendants of the perpetrators, our common interest in the development of a memorial started taking shape. This was followed by meetings and very close consultation with our Elders. We asked them what they wanted to do. They said they didn't want much. They wanted a big rock to stand

testament to an annual gathering of the memorial and for it to be placed close by to the massacre site. To act as symbol and recognition of the combined work of everyone involved in raising the profile of Myall Creek and its unique place nationally and internationally through the act of truth telling.

When our kids danced at the first memorial gathering at the Myall Creek Memorial Hall, something powerful happened, as they started the performance ALL the cockatoos rose up in unison. They flew from the site of the massacre several hundred meters away to the dance area. They all just rose up. The Elders commented that it was the spirits of those massacred being set free. It also rained every year for the first couple of years of the memorial. Our Elders mentioned that it symbolised several things including an act of cleansing, it was also professed that it symbolised the tears of our ancestors. At the first memorial a large number of rocks were placed around the memorial stone primarily by family and friends that lived locally. They remain a feature of the memorial today.

**Suzanne Blacklock OAM**

Tingha Elder of Gamilaraay Nation

# Foreword

## Precious memories from descendants of those who survived the massacre

I grew up in a tin hut at a place called the Dumboys (pronounced Doomboys) which was situated on a cattle stock route near the town of Delungra in North West NSW. Granny Munro was the only woman that was allowed to build a tin hut dwelling at this place. She in fact built three tin huts. The second hut for my mother and father and the third hut was built for my Aunt Maggie Marshall nee Munro whose husband was a member of the light horse and wounded in action during the Second World War.

There used to be around 70 or 80 people camped in tents and small makeshift huts at the Dumboys that consisted primarily of itinerant workers traveling through the area on horse and sulky, on bikes or literally on foot with just their swag looking for work. There was always a lot of coming and going by people. The Dumboys was situated close to a nearby dam and a railway water tank that the goods train and mail train use to stop at to refill their steam engines. A fresh water creek also flowed close by where we use to fill water that we would carry in containers on horse and cart. Granny Munro use to have 15 odd horses and other animals including a reindeer given to her as payment for work that was undertaken by her and my grandfather. For the record the reindeer came from members of a traveling circus but that's another story. Many of the horses were then given to people as a means of helping them on their way as they were traveling through. She was a very knowledgeable woman who knew a lot about Gamilaraay culture.

As a young child growing up here during the depression days I would walk three miles to school in Delungra with no shoes, a pair of pants during the winter and shorts during the summer months and clothes that included a top fashioned out of a flower bag that also doubled as a makeshift coat.

During the winter days the school used to give students gold stars for turning up to class. I was miles ahead of my peers. To overcome those harsh winter months the school teachers used to stand me in front of the open fire to warm me up. At the Dumboys my grandmother and aunts looked after me. Aunt Dibby Daley nee Munro, Aunt Liza Munro and Aunt Ali Munro (all my father's sisters). Aunt Liza was a fascinating woman she used to work for all the property owners in the region. We grew up on bush food that included kangaroo and goanna tail, echidna, blackberries, rock wallaby and fresh water crawbob. On school days my sugarbag was filled with geebung (persoonia genus), witchetty grubs rolled up in pieces of rag and five corners.

My grandfather James Munro and Granny Munro were very respected people in the local community that kept the painful history about Myall Creek to particular family members.

The Dumboys, where I grew up is approximately 20 miles (32km) from the Myall Creek massacre site. Over time as I started to meet people throughout my working life and sporting travels, particularly those from throughout the local district, a large number knew about the Myall Creek massacre, but they were not taught the history of the event during their local school years.

History is real and it's recorded. You can't change it. Politicians sometimes choose to ignore it. They give the impression that they can change it. I am proud of what has been achieved by the Myall Creek Memorial committee and the annual Myall Creek Memorial.

**Words by the late Gamilaraay Elder, Lyall Munro Snr**

# Foreword

Sunday 10th June, 2018, marked a significant date in the New England Region's and Australia's history, the 180th anniversary of the 1838 Myall Creek Massacre. Twenty-eight Aboriginal women, children and old men who were living peacefully on the banks of Myall Creek, were murdered by a group of twelve stockmen. This tragic loss of life was commonplace during the frontier conflicts in Australia. What has made Myall Creek so notable are not only the atrocities of the massacre, but the legal trials that followed, which for the first time in Australia's colonial history saw the perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal people, tried, found guilty and hanged as criminals.

Prior to moving to Armidale and attending the annual Myall Creek Memorial Commemoration in 2016, I had no knowledge of this massacre and only a partial understanding of this aspect of Australia's history. The commemoration was a moving and staggering experience, in which descendants of both the survivors and perpetrators shared their pain, remorse and hope for true and meaningful reconciliation. This first visit to the Myall Creek Memorial, made at the recommendation of NERAM's then Director, Robert Heather, emphasised the need he expressed to expand awareness of these events, as well as the memorial's purpose in assisting the journey of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people through gaining knowledge and understudying of the truth of our shared history.

Art offers a powerful opportunity to face trauma, and to initiate discussions about complex and critical subjects. Myall Creek and Beyond aims to facilitate a meaningful dialogue about this difficult history, prompted by newly commissioned works by Aboriginal Australian artists in an exhibition curated by Bianca Beetson. Some of the artists responded directly to the events of the massacre, while others have

Art offers a powerful opportunity to face trauma, and to initiate discussions about complex and critical subjects.

explored the impact and legacy of colonial conflict more broadly. Aspects of the exhibition artworks are confronting in their explicit reference to the brutality of the massacre and the fate of the perpetrators. Rightly so, this is a challenging but necessary subject to engage with and "the path to our future passes through the pain of our past."

Myall Creek and Beyond opened amongst a five-day program of exhibitions, symposiums, talks and the 180th Anniversary Myall Creek Memorial Commemoration. Over 1000 people participated in the various events, and hundreds more have since visited the exhibition at NERAM. The exhibition aims to use contemporary art practice to illuminate a suppressed history and contribute to the necessary national and global dialogue being led by artists, advocates, communities and organisations like the Friends of Myall Creek Memorial. We hope that we have shone another light on these issues which need to be known and truthfully acknowledged.

**Rachael Parsons**  
Art Museum Director  
New England Regional Art Museum

*Frontier Conflicts, Wars and Massacres in Australia 1770 – 1940s, 2016.*  
The Friends of Myall Creek Memorial

# An introduction to Welcome to Country

A path to reconciliation is practising awareness and respect. Incorporating a Welcome or acknowledgement protocol into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal peoples as the First Australians and custodians of their land. It promotes an awareness of the past and ongoing connection to place and land of Aboriginal Australians.

## What is a Welcome to Country?

Despite the absence of European fencing, customs for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Using the landscape as visual cues Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups had clear boundaries separating their Countries. Therefore crossing into another group's required permission. Once permissions were confirmed, the visitors were welcome to proceed so long as they respect the rules.

Although much has changed, today, these protocols are still essential elements of welcoming visitors. A Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event delivered by the Traditional Owners or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have been given permission from the Traditional Owners. A Welcome to Country can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.



## What is an acknowledgement of Country?

An acknowledgement of Country creates an opportunity for anyone to show respect to Traditional Owners. Strengthening the connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country it can be given by both non-Indigenous people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

With no concrete wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, a general statement takes the following form- *'I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present'* whilst a specific statement example is *'I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the (people) of the (nation) and pay my respects to Elders past and present'*. Like that of a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country is generally offered at the beginning of a public event – in a meeting, speech or formal setting. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can perform 'Acknowledgement of Country'. It is a demonstration of respect dedicated to the traditional custodians of the land (or sea) where the event, meeting, school function or conference takes place. It can be formal or informal.





## Welcome to Country

An example of Welcome to Country in Gamilaraay language with English translations. The Gamilaraay people form one of the largest Indigenous nations in Australia. Their lands extend from Northern NSW to Southern Queensland.

***Yaama gulbiyaay-aaba-li***

*Hello, welcome to all*

***Ngaya giirr ngaanngunda dhurran***

*I (would) like to (who) acknowledge*

***Ngay Gamilaraay ganugu***

*My Gamilaraay people*

***Dhuurranmay Nhama yalagiirmawu ngaragay yilaadhu***

*Elders (of) the past and present (now)*

***Nharma yalagiyu wurraga Nhalay dhawun***

*The traditional owners (of) this land (earth)*

***Ngiyanii warra-y yilaadhu***

*We stand (on) today*

***Naa-y maaru Gamilaraay dhawan ngiyaningu walaaybaa yilaadhu***

*Walk well (carefully) (on) Gamilaraay country, our homeland, today*

***Maarubaa Nginda***

*Thank you all*

# Why are Welcomes and Acknowledgements so important?

The invitation to perform a 'Welcome to Country' helps non-Indigenous people recognise Aboriginal culture and history. An 'Acknowledgement of Country' can be done by everyone, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, to pay respect to the fact that one is on Aboriginal land.

Unlike New Zealand, Canada and the United States, Australia has no treaty with its Aboriginal people. A Welcome or Acknowledgement of Country does not replace a treaty, native title or land rights, but they are small gestures of recognition of the association with land and place of the First Australians, and their history. An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a way that all people can show respect for Aboriginal culture and the ongoing relationship the Traditional Owners have with their land.

Note that an acknowledgement does not mean you are asking for permission to be on Aboriginal land. For that you'll have to contact an Aboriginal Land Council.

Source: Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country - Creative Spirits, retrieved from [creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country](https://creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country) and [reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Welcome-to-and-Acknowledgement-of-Country.pdf](https://reconciliation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Welcome-to-and-Acknowledgement-of-Country.pdf)

## PRIMARY

### Discussion

What is a Welcome/Acknowledgement of Country?

### Observation

Look at the Australian Aboriginal map. Who are the Indigenous people of your region?

See AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia (link in Myall Creek Resource Library).

### Activity

Complete the worksheet and practice the Acknowledgement of Country in pairs.

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

What is the difference between a Welcome to Country and an Acknowledgement of Country?

### Observation

Look at the Australian Aboriginal map.

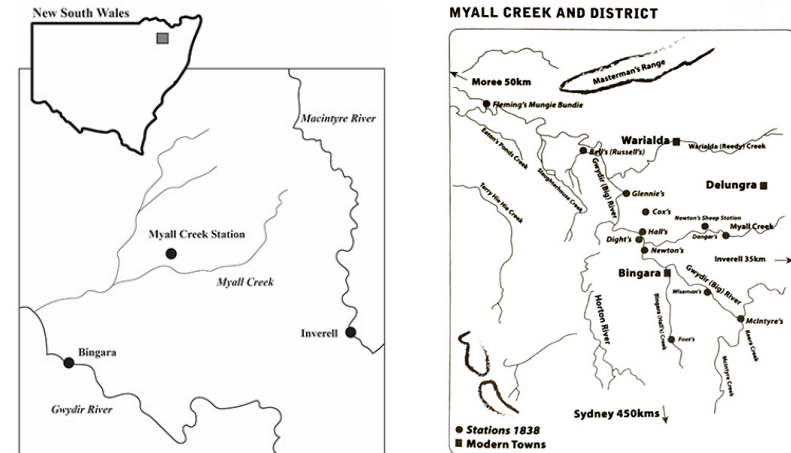
Who are the Indigenous people of your region?

See AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia (link in Myall Creek Resource Library).

### Activity

Research why Australia doesn't have a treaty with its Aboriginal people, and why an Acknowledgement/Welcome to Country is so important.

## The Wirrayaraay people



The Wirrayaraay are Indigenous Australians from what is regarded since colonisation as the north-west region of New South Wales. It is estimated their lands extended over 11,000km<sup>2</sup> on the northern side of the Gwydir River from Moree to Bingara.

A tribal clan of the Gamilaraay nation, the Wirrayaraay peoples' spoken language is Wiraiari. The identity of the Wirrayaraay is derived from their spiritual relationship with the land. In their Country they cared for the land, harvested animals, fish, root crops, grains, and fruits in a seasonal cycle.

By the mid 1830s' conflict had significantly reduced the population of the Wirrayaraay people. In search of sanctuary, a group of Wirrayaraay people set up camp on Henry Dangar's property Myall Creek Station in May 1838.

Source: myallcreek.org

Colin Isaacs, *Myall Creek I*, 2005, acrylic on board



## Colin Issacs

### Artist statement, *Myall Creek and Beyond*

It's about the before times.

Family, community, and harmony before colonisation.

The foundation of tribal law is love, family and the effort to maintain them. This is the ideology contained in this artwork.

We are losing so much of those cultural courtesies and we need to remind ourselves what these were and what they are for.

The spoken word comes from Yimma and Yamma, my grandfather and grandmother. They were the ones that would talk to me about social etiquette.

At Myall Creek they were living as a family, and were bluntly disrupted.

We hear so much about culture and clashes. Both sides have truths that need to be remembered.

Never forget.

Colin Isaacs, *Myall Creek I*, 2005, acrylic on board

# Indigenous traditions: Possum Skin Cloaks

## History of possum skin cloaks

Possum skin cloaks were traditionally not only a form of clothing protection but were personal signifiers of identity and connectedness to Country. Inscribed on the inside of the skins were designs relating to an individual such as their totem, moiety, tribal patternings and songlines. The skins were warm and protective and when worn with the design side out, (usually in ceremonies), they radiated stories of who you were and where you were from. So personal were these precious garments you were usually buried in your cloak. There is a considerable volume of references for the tradition of wearing possum skin cloaks by the Gamilaraay people.

After colonisation cloak-making rapidly disappeared as dispossessed Aboriginal Peoples no longer had access to resources and subsequently the New South Wales government distributed blankets which were a poor substitute.

## Revitalisation of possum skin cloak making

The contemporary revitalisation of possum skin cloak-making by Victorian Indigenous artists has highlighted the significance of the cloaks for cultural resilience and restitution. Seeing the contemporary cloaks as an authoritative medium for healing, cultural renewal, and reclamation, this art form acts as a significant medium of visual culture that can be active in the community.

Making a cloak is a respectful but intensive process. The task of sewing the cloak can be demanding. The skins must be pieced together, trimmed and positioned toward each other as they are stitched. Working with the materiality of the pelts and ochres — with the visceral feel of the fur and



rawness of the pigments — was a first for many of the local participants who brought their personal stories to life on the skins. When crafting objects in the tradition of your Ancestors in a contemporary space, you can sense the past, present and future intertwining. Making a possum skin cloak reclaims histories and symbolises the ongoing strength of Indigenous cultural heritage and identity. The past informs the present and this tradition resonates with contemporary context.

Making a possum skin cloak is an empowering form of un-silencing — asserting a voice and having continued presence in today's world.

### **Carol McGregor**

Artist's statement for *Myall Creek and Beyond* exhibition





## The Myall Creek Gathering Cloak

Curator, Bianca Beetson organised the making of a possum skin cloak for the *Myall Creek and Beyond* exhibition with an aim to include descendants of the survivors of the Myall Creek Massacre in a project which would evoke a sense of healing and leave a legacy.

Artist Carol McGregor worked alongside Adele Chapman-Burgess and Avril Chapman to undertake several community workshops in April 2018, working with Aboriginal communities of Bingara, Inverell and surrounds to create a possum skin cloak for the exhibition.

The central theme of the cloak is Myall Creek, and songlines fan out to represent the stories from the land and travelling routes of the Wirrayaraay people killed in the Myall Creek massacre.



Carol McGregor with Adele Chapman-Burgess, Avril Chapman and the community of the Myall Creek Gathering Cloak, *Myall Creek Gathering Cloak*, 2018, natural ochre, thread on possum skins



## PRIMARY

### Discussion

What does a possum skin cloak represent?

### Observation

Can you see a map on The Myall Creek Gathering Cloak?  
Where is it going?

### Activity

Create a visual map of a place you have travelled to recently using your own set of illustrations, symbols, colours and patterns.

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

What does a possum skin cloak represent?  
Why is it significant?

### Observation

What symbolism is used in The Myall Creek Gathering Cloak  
and what does it mean?

### Activity

Research the context and purpose of The Myall Creek  
Gathering Cloak.

Carol McGregor with Adele Chapman-Burgess, Avril Chapman and the community of the Myall Creek Gathering Cloak, *Myall Creek Gathering Cloak*, 2018, natural ochre, thread on possum skins



# Historical context.. what are the Australian Frontier Wars?

It is understood that Britain took possession of Australia under the European concept of terra nullius ('land belonging to no-one' or 'land without owners'.)

The Frontier Wars refer to conflict between Europeans and Aboriginal Peoples including battles, acts of resistance, and open massacres. The fighting took place several months after the landing of the First Fleet in January 26th, 1788 and the last recorded clashes over 140 years later in 1934.

Since European colonisation, the effects of disease, which occasioned in infertility, loss of hunting ground, and starvation significantly reduced the population of Aboriginal peoples. Social issues and general despair depreciated quality of life and tribal cohesion, limiting the ability to resist invasion and dispossession.

Historians argue how many Indigenous casualties were involved in colonial violence. It is estimated that more than 750,000 Aboriginal People inhabited what is now known as Australia in 1788, and in 1900 the population of Aboriginal peoples is thought to have reduced by 90 per cent.

The Frontier Wars are yet to be acknowledged as official wars in Australia. Australia has not yet entered into a treaty with Indigenous Australians. As such, many Indigenous people consider themselves to be continuing the 'spirit of the resistance' today.

Sources:

[myallcreek.org/the-massacre-story](http://myallcreek.org/the-massacre-story)

[aboriginalheritage.org/history/history](http://aboriginalheritage.org/history/history)

[aboriginalheritage.org/history/history](http://aboriginalheritage.org/history/history)

[sbs.com.au/nitv/explainer/what-were-frontier-wars](http://sbs.com.au/nitv/explainer/what-were-frontier-wars)

Judy Watson, *Myall Creek 1 – 28* (detail and installation perspective), 2018, charcoal and acrylic medium on watercolour paper



## PRIMARY

### Discussion

- What does terra nullius mean?
- What is colonisation?
- How did Aboriginal Peoples live before colonisation, and how did this change when the European colonists arrived?
- How could European colonists tell if the land they were on was inhabited by others?
- What landmarks do Aboriginal peoples use to signify their region?

### Activity

Create a visual map of a place you have travelled to recently using your own set of illustrations, symbols, colours and patterns.

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

- How did terra nullius have a lasting impact on the relationship between Aboriginal people and European colonists?
- What things were introduced to Australia by the colonists that greatly affected Aboriginal people and their way of living?
- Discuss why the Australian frontier wars are not considered a civil war.
- What is the 'spirit of resistance' and why does it exist?

### Activity

Analyse The Guardian's interactive map of massacres in Australia. In groups choose a state and compile a list of massacres with key dates of when they occurred. Compare and contrast the results.



*Myall Creek and beyond* exhibition view, NERAM, 2018



### Learn more online from The Guardian

[theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/mar/04/massacre-map-australia-the-killing-times-frontier-wars](https://theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/mar/04/massacre-map-australia-the-killing-times-frontier-wars)



## Judy Watson

### Artist statement, *Myall Creek and Beyond*

My great great grandmother Rosie survived a massacre at Lawn Hill in North West Queensland. Her story has been retold by Ruby Saltmere in the books: 'Frontier Justice' by Tony Roberts and 'A Conspiracy of Silence' by Timothy Bottoms. The Myall Creek massacre is connected by blood memory to what was an endemic plague of 'dispersals' a euphemism for the systematic murder of Aboriginal people across Australia.

Canvases were placed on the ground and rubbings were made in charcoal. Earth from the site was mixed with water and splashed across their surface. One canvas was placed around a tree and a frottage made of the scar within the bark. Washes of yellow and red ochre on paper were overlaid with earth washes from this site.

Back in my Brisbane studio I overlaid maps of the journey of the perpetrators onto one canvas. On another, I overlaid the map of Police Magistrate Denny Day's trip to apprehend these men and bring them to justice.

Judy Watson, *The Big Bushwhack, Myall Creek 1838* (details), 2018  
earth charcoal, chinagraph pencil on paper



Judy Watson, *The Big Bushwhack, Myall Creek 1838* (installation perspective), 2018  
 earth charcoal, chinagraph pencil on paper

# The Myall Creek Massacre: a timeline of events

By the mid-1830s conflict had greatly reduced the population of the Wirrayaraay people, a tribal clan of the Gamilaraay nation. The massacre of approximately 28 Wirrayaraay people at Myall Creek on 10 June 1838, the subsequent court cases and the hanging of seven colonists for their role in the massacre are pivotal in the history of the relationship between European colonists and Aboriginal Peoples.

## The events of 1837 + 1838

- 1837 Myall Creek Station in north western New South Wales was established by Henry Dangar and became part of his pastoral empire.
- 1837-1838 – The station was managed by William Hobbs, a young freeman from Somerset. William Hobbs' personal staff included three assigned convicts - Charles Kilmeister (stockman) George Anderson (hutkeeper) and Andrew Burrowes (responsible for horses)
- 1837- An increase in conflict between European colonists and Aboriginal Peoples reached a peak. Several incidents involving the killing of a few colonists or livestock resulted in large scale killings of Aboriginal Peoples.
- 1837 – Towards the end of 1837, Major James Nunn arrived from Sydney accompanied by a party of 30 troopers conducting a series of murderous campaigns extending over 53 days.
- 1838 - The violence explodes into what was known as the 'Drive' or 'Bushwhack' in the Gwydir region of NSW.
- 26th January 1838 - Up to 300 Gamilaraay people are massacred in surprise attacks led by Major Nunn and his troopers at Waterloo Creek in the Gwydir region of NSW.
- May 1838 – Seeking sanctuary a group of Wirrayaraay people camp on Henry Dangar's station at Myall Creek near present-day Bingara, NSW. Invited by stockman Charles Kilmeister, the group had been given nicknames by the colonists. Nicknames included 'Old Daddy', Joey and King Sandy – all Tribal Elders, Sandy – a warrior aged man, Martha – a younger woman, Sandy's wife and Charley's mother, Ipeta – a young woman, Charley – a 6 year old boy, and John and Jimmy (later Munro) – young Aboriginal brothers.

## The events on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June 1838

- Early Sunday morning 10 strong male members (including elder 'King Sandy') of the Wirrayaraay tribe camped at Myall Creek accompanied Thomas Forster from the neighbouring station to assist him in bark cutting. Upon arrival at 4pm they learnt of the armed stockmen planning to go to Dangar's station at Myall Creek that day. Forster urged the Wirrayaraay men to return immediately; by 4:30pm they were on their way back.
- At 3:30pm a group of 12 armed stockmen arrived at the huts at Myall Creek station where the Wirrayaraay tribe were preparing their evening meal. Both station manager, William Hobbs and his worker Andrew Burrowes were absent from the station. The Wirrayaraay tribe were ordered into the hut with two boys aged 8 and 9 able to escape. Stockman John Russell tied their hands together.
- Myall Creek station stockman Charles Kilmeister joined the group of stockmen, despite his relationships with the Wirrayaraay people. Hutkeeper, George Anderson refused and later gave evidence against them. During the trial George Anderson would later identify John Fleming (the only one not a convict), and John Russell as the ringleaders. Other armed stockmen included convicts and ex-convicts Charles Telluce, James Oates, William Hawkins, John Blake, James Parry, Edward Foley, George Palliser, James Lamb, and John 'Black' Johnstone. Anderson saved a boy in the hut and kept two young Peel River Aboriginal men Yintayintin and his brother Knuimunga (known as Davey + Billy) by his side. Within 20 minutes of arrival, the group of Wirrayaraay men, women and children were hauled off by rope 800m west of the hut and brutally massacred. Davey and Anderson both asked for one woman to be spared. Anderson asked that Ipeta was spared but she wasn't, and the perpetrators 'gave' him another woman. Another Wirrayaraay woman was spared at the massacre site – it is unknown who spared her, yet John Blake was said to have 'taken her around' with him the next day.
- At 10:00pm the 10 Wirrayaraay men returned from the nearby station to discover the massacre. By 10:30pm the 10 men, two women, two boys and one young child flee the scene in fear of the armed stockmen returning. They make their way towards nearby station, 'MacIntyre's'.

## Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June 1838

- Monday afternoon the killers returned to Anderson's hut, spending the night and burning the bodies of their victims the next day.

## Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 1838

- 'King Sandy's' group reached McIntyre's Station and were found by the same group of armed stockmen. Some are murdered as they run for their lives. It is believed that King Sandy survived.
- William Hobbs returned to Myall Creek and is guided by Davey (Yintayintin) to the site of the massacre. The attempt to burn the victims had not been successful with evidence of the victims remains. Charles Kilmeister denied being involved in the massacre.
- William Hobbs and Thomas Forster agree to report the incident to authorities and to inform Myall Creek station owner, Henry Dangar. A letter by Hobbs to Dangar to report the incident was not sent until after Hobbs knew the massacre was being reported to new Governor Sir George Gipps by another squatter from the district named Frederick Foot.

## Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2000

162 years after the Myall Creek massacre, in a moving ceremony, in which descendants of the perpetrators were embraced by descendants of the survivors, the memorial was dedicated. Descendants of both victims and perpetrators continue to dedicate and remember.

Source: *The Myall Creek Massacre Its History, its memorial and the Opening Ceremony*, Ted Stubbins and Paulette Smith

# The Myall Creek Massacre

- Despite instructions from the British colonial office to treat Aboriginal peoples with goodwill and kindness, competition for land and resources invariably resulted in frontier violence. In response to the intensifying conflict, the colonial administration ordered colonists to defend themselves and pushed for Aboriginal peoples to stay away from European colonies. Aboriginal peoples were increasingly viewed as a serious threat to colonists and it wasn't long before colonists took things into their own hands. This action was often supported by Government authorities and police.
- Across the 18th and 19th centuries Frontier violence became commonplace. By the 1830s, despite being a crime punishable by death, murder of Aboriginal Peoples by British colonials was widely accepted. The massacre at Myall Creek was just one of numerous extremely violent events resulting from colonial possession of land in the 19th century.
- The Myall Creek massacre was the first and only time the colonial administration intervened to ensure the laws of the colony were applied equally to Aboriginal people and colonists involved in Frontier violence. It is also the first and only time Europeans have been executed for the massacre of Aboriginal people.
- The execution of convicted British citizens caused more outrage in the colonial community of New South Wales than the massacre of the Wirrayaraay people.

Source: [nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/myall-creek-massacre](http://nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/myall-creek-massacre)  
[aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/first-encounters-and-frontier-conflict](http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/first-encounters-and-frontier-conflict)



The Myall Creek Massacre. Note the rope binding the Aboriginal people together and the little child on the back of her mother on the far right. Published in *The Chronicles of Crime*, 1841. Source: Myall Creek Massacre (1838) - Creative Spirits, retrieved from: [creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838](http://creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838)

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

- During this time, why were massacres so common in Aboriginal communities? What were some of the causes of this conflict?
- What is so significant about the Myall Creek Massacre in Australian history?

### Activity

Start a discussion with students. What was morally wrong about the Myall Creek massacre? Get students to debate with one another using the perspectives of both victims and perpetrators involved (eg. Kilmeister, Dangar and Yintayintin.)

# The trial

Muswellbrook Police Magistrate Edward Denny Day was instructed by new to the colony Governor George Gipps to institute a strict inquiry and apprehend all parties involved in the Myall Creek massacre. After gathering information from 19 witnesses in the region on Wednesday 8th August, Day arrested Kilmeister and the other 10 convicts and ex-convicts involved and brought them down to the Sydney gaol. Missing was the only freeman amongst the group, John Fleming, who was never captured.

Leading up to the trial, Henry Dangar and other landholders in the region set up a fund called the 'Black Association' in order to pay for a defence team for the accused men. Dangar dismissed Hobbs in disapproval of his involvement in reporting the massacre and his decision to be a witness for the prosecution. Meanwhile in Sydney, public opinion ran in favour of the accused stockmen.

## First trial

On 15 November 1838, the first trial was held in the NSW Supreme Court before Chief Justice Sir James Dowling and a jury of 12 colonists. The first trial set out to establish that murder had been committed at Myall Creek and that the accused were guilty of this crime. The prosecution centred around the burned skeletal remains of a very tall Wirrayaraay adult male, identified in court as 'Daddy'.

The so-called 'Black Association' had funded a formidable defence team to represent the accused on trial. The 'Black Association' allegedly set out on a program of intimidation and advised jurors to absent themselves from court. At the conclusion of the trial, none of the witnesses, such as the Myall Creek hut keeper George Anderson, could swear that the remains of the large body was that of the Wirrayaraay Elder, Daddy. Therefore, despite evidence presented, the jury declared all 11 defendants not guilty after less than 20 minutes' deliberation.

However, Attorney-General John Plunkett who was prosecuting the case declared dissatisfaction with the verdict and kept the prisoners in gaol pending trial on new charges and using different evidence, this time indicting the prisoners for the murder of an 'Aboriginal Black Child'. The defendants' counsel had advised clients to remain silent during the trial. Yet, in hoping the defendants would give evidence against each other when divided, John Plunkett separated them into one group of seven and another of four. The charges were dropped against four of the accused.

## Second trial

Given the high level of negative attention the first trial received in the press, it became increasingly difficult to assemble a jury that would turn up to court, let alone remain impartial. Arguments were taking place throughout the colony as to whether a fair trial could be held at all. On 26 November 1838, the trial was postponed to allow the defendants' counsel to read the new charges, and the following day legal arguments took place as to whether the defendants could be retried.

The second trial officially began on 29 November 1838, yet many of the men summoned for jury service failed to turn up. John Hubert Plunkett asked the judge to fine them harshly. Penalties of up to £10 were issued – equivalent to over \$1000 Australian dollars in 2020.

The lack of sufficient jurors led the Court Sheriff to 'pray a tales', hauling in any male passer-by in the vicinity of the court. Once a full jury was present, the trial began. Seven of the defendants were tried by a new judge, Justice William Burton. At the conclusion of the second trial, all seven men were found guilty and sentenced to public execution.



The lives of the executed men might not have been sacrificed but for the Governments of this Colony who refused protection to settlers, and by this refusal give rise to massacre.

Adapted from the Sydney Herald 26/12/1838

## The aftermath – what happened after the trial?

The aftermath of the massacre was marked by a series of unusual events for the time. Firstly, it was unusual the massacre was reported to authorities and secondly, it was unusual that the then Governor assigned a police magistrate to investigate the reports.

Eleven of the twelve settlers involved in the massacre were arrested for the murders but were found not guilty. Seven of the men were then re-arrested and tried again. The second trial delivered a guilty verdict and the judge sentenced all seven to death.

On 18 December 1838, after all legal objections were exhausted and the Executive Council rejected petitions for clemency, the sentences were carried out. The hanging of the seven European colonists caused controversy throughout the colony and led to heightened racial tensions and hardened settler attitudes towards Aboriginal people.

Since then, the story of the massacre has been retold in a number of poems and books and has continued to remind and teach Australians

about the mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples during the period of frontier conflict. The story has also become a symbol of Australia's reconciliation movement.

In 2000, 162 years after the massacre, the Myall Creek Memorial Committee opened the Myall Creek Memorial 'in an act of reconciliation and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history'. This memorial brought together the descendants of the victims, survivors and perpetrators of the massacre in an act of reconciliation.

Source: Myall Creek Massacre (1838) - Creative Spirits, retrieved from [creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838](http://creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838)

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

- What is the purpose of a trial?
- Who were the 'Black Association'? Why was the association so destructive to the trial?
- What were the consequences of the trial? Did the trial cause further conflict and racism between Aboriginal Peoples and the colony?

### Activity #1

Speaking activity: Using the quotes below have students assume the role of the Crown or Defence and deliver your 'opening argument' to the jury.

'I look on the blacks as a set of monkeys, and the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better... I would never see a white man hanged for killing a black.' – One of the jurors, quoted in *The Australian*, 18 December 1838

'I must tell you that the life of a black is as precious and valuable in the eye of the law, as that of the highest noble in the land'.  
- Chief Justice Sir James Dowling quoted during the first trial, 15 November 1838

[law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial\\_case\\_law/nsw/cases/case\\_index/1838/r\\_v\\_kilmeister1/](http://law.mq.edu.au/research/colonial_case_law/nsw/cases/case_index/1838/r_v_kilmeister1/)

### Activity #2

Mock Trial: Allocate key characters to students from Trials 1 and 2. Students are to research their assigned characters and prepare a response.

#### Trial 1:

Judge: Chief Justice Sir James Dowling

The Crown: Attorney-General John Hubert Plunkett

Defence: Mr a'Beckett, William Forster and Mr Windeyer

Jurors: 12 colonists

11 accused colonists: ie; Charles Kilmeister, John Russell, James Lamb

Witness: George Anderson

#### Trial 2:

Judge: Justice William Burton

The Crown: Attorney-General John Hubert Plunkett

Defence: Mr a'Beckett, William Forster and Mr Windeyer

Jurors: 'pray a tales' (have students construct their own characters with differing perspectives)

7 convicted colonists sentenced to death: Charles Kilmeister, John Russell, James Lamb, William Hawkins, James Parry, Edward Foley, John 'Black' Johnstone

Witness: George Anderson

# Fiona Foley

## Artist statement, *Myall Creek and Beyond*

In my studio in the sculpture department at Sydney College of the Arts, Balmain, I carved figure after figure and assembled a forked structure to support the weight of nine hanging black men. One white figure stood on the ground adjacent, representing the perpetrator, along with a long dark shadow. The year was 1986. The sculpture was first exhibited at Willoughby Workshop Art Centre in the exhibition "Urban Koories" and was titled *Annihilation of the Blacks*.<sup>1</sup> I invited my lecturers to critique the work at this exhibition and was unprepared for what came next.<sup>2</sup> It was a demoralising experience, as their comments simply hung in the air, with negative statement after negative statement. An hour passed; I was totally floored by what these three academics said as they took turns to crush my spirit and my history. The irony was that I also began to realise they knew nothing of the subject matter that this sculpture evoked.<sup>3</sup>

All three seemed very unfamiliar with the history of east coast Australia. One of the comments made about *Annihilation of the Blacks* was, "It says nothing: it's just a full stop." Other derogatory remarks made at my end of year critique remain seared into my brain. I left Sydney College of the Arts at the end of 1986 feeling very unsupported by the staff. All I could do was to attain my Bachelor of Visual Arts and I did not attend the graduation ceremony. I was unable to celebrate my time there.

From 1984 onwards I was an avid reader of frontier history. It was not taught in the academy or spoken of in society more generally.<sup>4</sup> As I researched and looked into race relations (and its genocides) in Australia there were some common threads. Disposing of the evidence was one such thread. Burning bodies or dumping them in watercourses was a common practice across Australia.<sup>5</sup>

In 2003 I created a major show for Griffith University titled "Red Ochre Me". A number of pieces talked about massacres in general. More specifically, I made installations titled *Bone Boxes and Massacre*.<sup>6</sup>



*Massacre* was a ten-metre-long container for soft grey ash and a richer black charcoal, a metaphor for how evidence was intentionally erased by the colonial perpetrators. Although there were a number of hard-hitting works in the show, the response was resounding silence from the arts community. This perplexed but did not deter me from continuing to voice the historical quagmire of race in this country.

My next foray into this subject matter was a public art commission titled *Witnessing to Silence* outside of Brisbane Magistrates Court, in 2004. This work wrote into the pavement the names of 94 massacre sites in the state of Queensland. It took the Brisbane art world, and the work's legal hosts, by surprise.



The invitation to create a new work about the 1838 massacre at Myall Creek has touched me deeply. For the New England Regional Art Museum I have created an installation consisting of ten hoods, twenty-eight pairs of shoes, a ten-metre line of ash and a gouache painting of a single white cockatoo feather that I found at the site. I hope that this new work resonates for the residents in its reflection on the colonial pathology that permeates our scarred Australian psyche.

<sup>1</sup> It was rare for a third-year art student to be represented in a group exhibition during their studies. I felt validated when *Annihilation of the Blacks* sold to the Australian National Museum, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> "Urban Koories: Two Exhibitions of Urban Aboriginal Art," Willoughby Workshop Arts Centre, 1986, curated by Chris Watson and Suhanya Raffel.

<sup>3</sup> I was in an educational environment where I was in a position of educating the educators.

<sup>4</sup> I bought my first book on Australian history in 1984, titled *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, by C.D. Rowley.

<sup>5</sup> The mutilation and decapitation of Aboriginal bodies at Myall Creek, and the burning of the bodies after the massacre had taken place, reflects on the deep pathology that lingers, in the atmosphere of this place, to this day.

<sup>6</sup> As documented in an essay written by Anna Haebich, and Shaun Weston's thoughtful review, *Red Ochre Me: Fiona Foley*, *Local Art*, Issue 6, August 2003.

Fiona Foley, *Scarred* (installation perspective above and detail on previous page), 2018, 28 pairs of shoes, 10 calico hoods, gouache on watercolour paper, charcoal, ash. Artist assistant: Scott Harrower



Fiona Foley, *Scarred* (installation perspective), 2018, 28 pairs of shoes, 10 calico hoods, gouche on watercolour paper, charcoal, ash. Artist assistant: Scott Harrower

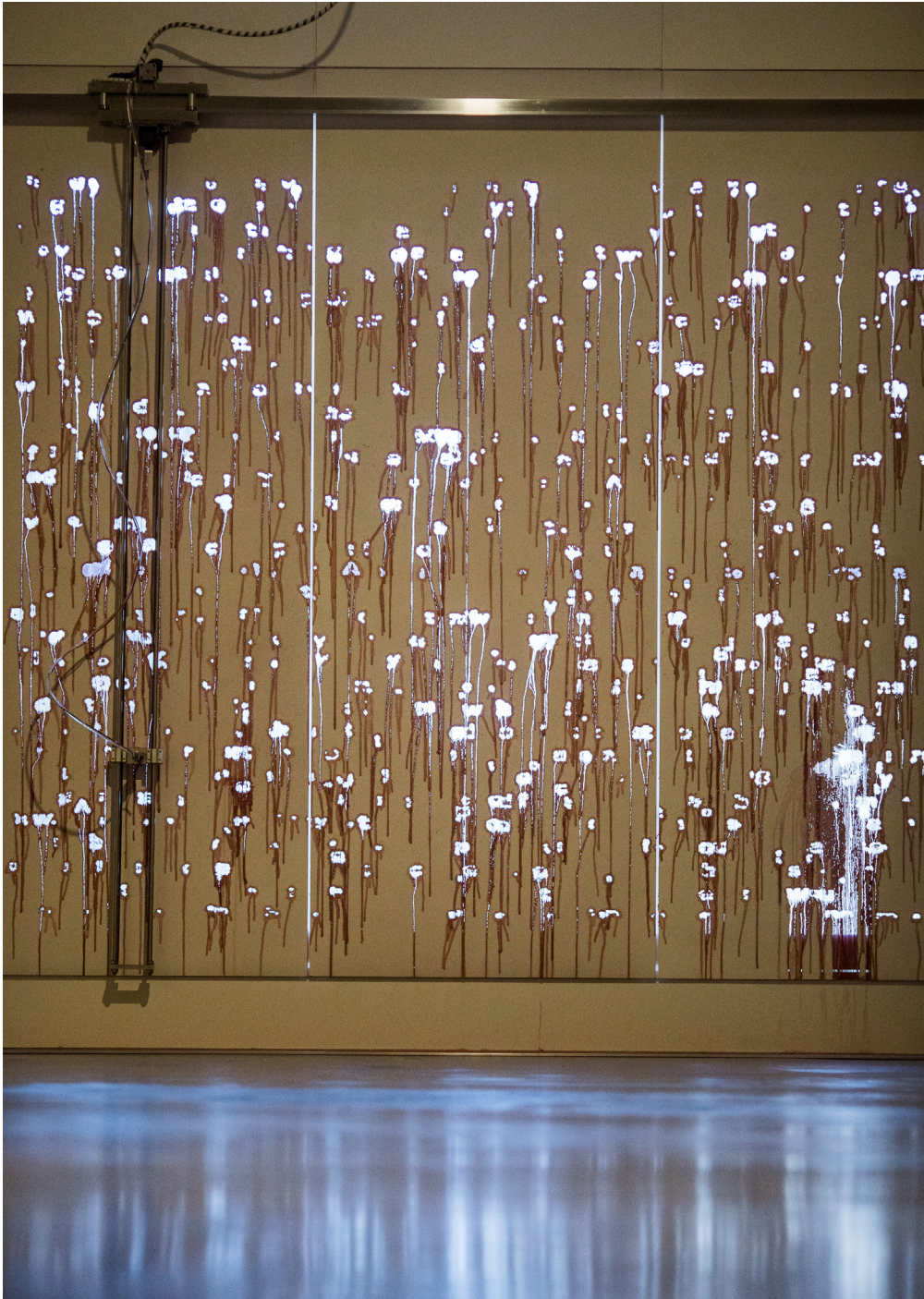


## SECONDARY

Artist Focus, Fiona Foley. Use these questions to analyse Fiona Foley's installation 'Scarred'.

- How does Foley's work 'Scarred' depict the Myall Creek massacre?
- What visual conventions (e.g. Repetition, form, colour) has Foley used in the work 'Scarred'? How do these visual conventions convey meaning?
- What visual symbolism is present, and what do they represent?
- How does the artwork 'Scarred' engage the artwork? What emotional reactions are provoked?

Fiona Foley, *Scarred* (installation perspective above and detail on previous page), 2018, 28 pairs of shoes, 10 calico hoods, gouche on watercolour paper, charcoal, ash. Artist assistant: Scott Harrower



## Robert Andrew

### Artist statement, *Myall Creek and Beyond*

The work, *Reveal*, is a kinetic piece that is created by what I call a palimpsest machine. The machine uses water to erode surfaces and layers of chalks and ochres that have been built up on a solid substrate. What results is a palimpsest of visible traces of all that lies underneath the top, white layer.

The spraying water slowly performs the writing of lines of text. Although the lines begin with definite form, the watery words become unclear and changeable. Through the palimpsest process of scraping back and re-inscribing the surface, new images emerge. The changing runs and bleeds of the chalks and ochres provide an opportunity to look and to see beyond the words. This is a way that I address our different ways of constant remembering. I am also drawing attention to changes that bring renewal. The whitewash of colonial histories is eroded and previously suppressed stories and images emerge. The residues of history fall towards the floor making way for new images to remain.

In attending the previous Myall Creek Massacre Memorial Day and then traveling back to site over the last year, I have experienced and felt the great importance and significance in remembering the people who passed in the massacre, the atrocities enacted upon them, and the importance of the Acknowledgement of the disciplinary actions taken on the perpetrators of the massacre. Also evident and significant to me on Memorial Day was witnessing the importance in people connecting with each other in that deep remembering.

I have gained a deeper understanding of the historic atrocities, injustices and justices of this event through engaging with the history both personally and through the connection to individuals and communities. In this work I take the opportunity to reveal layers of knowing this place as a significant memorial site. By eroding away many concealing layers I pay respect to the histories of generations of all families connected to this one memorial site and I acknowledge how this event contributes to opening up, revealing and continuing discussions around the multitude of other Aboriginal massacre sites around Australia.

Robert Andrew, *Reveal* (installation perspective), 2018  
ochres, oxides, aluminum, acrylic, electromechanical elements



## PRIMARY + SECONDARY

Artist focus: Robert Andrew

- What materials does Andrew use, and what processes does he implement into his artmaking?
- What is conceptual about Andrew's artwork?
- What does the artwork titled 'Reveal' convey to viewers, and what part does it play in the Myall Creek exhibition?
- How does Andrew actively engage the audience through his artwork?



Learn more online

Robert Andrew:  
[robotandrew.com](http://robotandrew.com)

Robert Andrew, *Reveal* (detail), 2018, ochres, oxides, aluminium, acrylic, electro mechanical elements





## Public expression

In response to the Myall Creek Massacre are examples of two pieces of writing. One by Gamilaraay singer/songwriters Radical Son and Quarralia Knox written for the 180th commemorations in 2018, whilst the other by Irish poet Eliza Hamilton Dunlop in response to the Frontier violence occurring in the New South Wales colony in 1838.

### *We are here now*

#### Song by Quarralia Knox, Radical Son and Tim Leha

Exploring the history of the Myall Creek massacre, artists Quarralia Knox, Radical Son and Tim Leha held touring music workshops in the region to inspire the role of music and the arts in healing.

Focusing on the importance of truth-telling in reconciliation, this song blends the creative responses of the participants and artists to the events of the Myall Creek massacre, with a direct response to the lingering impacts of the violence and dispossession during the Australian Colonial Frontier Wars. The resulting work 'We are here now' takes the form of both a live performance and a video installation as part of the 180th Commemorations of Myall Creek and is featured in the exhibition Myall Creek and Beyond. Here you will see the first three verses, with the full song lyrics and video available as an additional resource.

Quarralia Knox and Radical Son, *We are here now*, 2018  
sound recording of original song performance  
Writing process: Quarralia Knox and Radical Son  
Lyrics written by: Quarralia Knox  
Performed by: Quarralia Knox and Radical Son  
Video by: Tim Leha



Quarralia Knox and Radical Son, *We are here now*, 2018  
sound recording of original song performance  
Writing process: Quarralia Knox and Radical Son  
Lyrics written by: Quarralia Knox  
Performed by: Quarralia Knox and Radical Son  
Video by: Tim Leha

## *We are here now*

Let me paint an image inside your mind  
And set the scene  
Can you see the grass so lush and green  
So many trees  
Can you hear the birds call as they fly  
Animals of plenty  
Can you feel that peaceful kind of life  
Precious air so clean

From a distance can you see the ships  
Sailing over the seas  
Getting closer and closer to the land you called home for over 40,000 years  
Can you see the world that you've known so well start to disappear  
Connection to your mother earth replaced by lingering fear

We are here now  
So many trying so many crying  
We are still here now  
Trying to forgive but how can we forget  
People from Myall Creek  
Ngiyani winangay ganunga  
We remember you  
All the people  
Ngiyani winangay ganunga  
We remember you

Word has spread but you keep positivity  
To get by each day  
Move along and keep the peace with strange new friends  
That's just your way  
Like any other day you go about your life  
Just the way you made it

# The Aboriginal Mother, Eliza Hamilton Dunlop December 1838

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop was an Irish Poet residing in Wollombi, New South Wales after arriving to the colony at the beginning of 1838. In response to the Frontier violence, and in particular, the Myall Creek massacre and the hanging of the seven perpetrators Dunlop wrote a 72 line poem 'The Aboriginal Mother'. This poem was first published in The Australian Newspaper with mixed reviews from the public on the 13th December 1838... just days before the public executions took place. Here you will find the first two stanzas of the poem, and the original insert from the Australian Newspaper in 1838. With the full poem available as an additional resource.

## SONGS OF AN EXILE. (No. 4.)

### THE ABORIGINAL MOTHER, (From Myall's Creek.)

*Oh! hush thee—hush my baby,  
I may not tend thee yet.  
Our forest home is distant far,  
And midnight's star is set.  
Now, hush thee—or the pale-faced men  
Will hear thy piercing wail,  
And what would then thy mother's tears  
Or feeble strength avail!*

*Oh, could'st thy little bosom  
That mother's torture feel,  
Or could'st thou know thy father lies  
Struck down by English steel ;  
Thy tender form would wither,  
Like the kniven on the sand,  
And the spirit of my perished tribe  
Would vanish from our land.*

Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, 1838



*Myall Creek and beyond* exhibition view, NERAM, 2018

Sources:

Remember the Myall Creek Massacre, by Lyndall Ryan and Jane Lydon [books.google.com.au/books?id=zGZZDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&pg=PT88#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?id=zGZZDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&pg=PT88#v=onepage&q&f=false)  
National Library of Australia [trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/36861275/4298642](https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/36861275/4298642)

## SECONDARY

### Activity: Creative Writing

Using the song 'We are here now' and poem 'The Aboriginal Mother' have students document their emotional responses and formulate those into a creative writing piece or poem.



## How do we achieve reconciliation?

### The Memorial...

- In 1965 local Bingara resident, Len Payne, proposed the erection of a memorial in memory of those who died at Myall Creek. With no community support this proposal was declined. Throughout the 1980s Payne, along with others, laid a wreath at the site every year on the 10th of June.
- In 1998 a conference on reconciliation organised by the Uniting Church was held at Myall Creek, on the invitation of Sue Blacklock, a descendent of those who survived the massacre. The decision was made upon the erection of a memorial. The Myall Creek Memorial Committee was later formed to carry out this resolution.
- It was decided by descendants of those massacred at Myall Creek that this memorial would be erected with 'the purpose of reconciling Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.'
- On Sunday 10th of June 2000, 162 years after the Myall Creek massacre, in a moving ceremony the memorial was dedicated. Descendants of both those murdered and the perpetrators continue to dedicate and remember.



**The bronze plaque on the Myall Creek memorial stone reads:**

“In memory of the Wirrayaraay people who were murdered on the slopes of this ridge in an unprovoked but premeditated act in the late afternoon of 10 June, 1838.

Erected on 10 June 2000 by a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians in an act of reconciliation, and in acknowledgement of the truth of our shared history.”

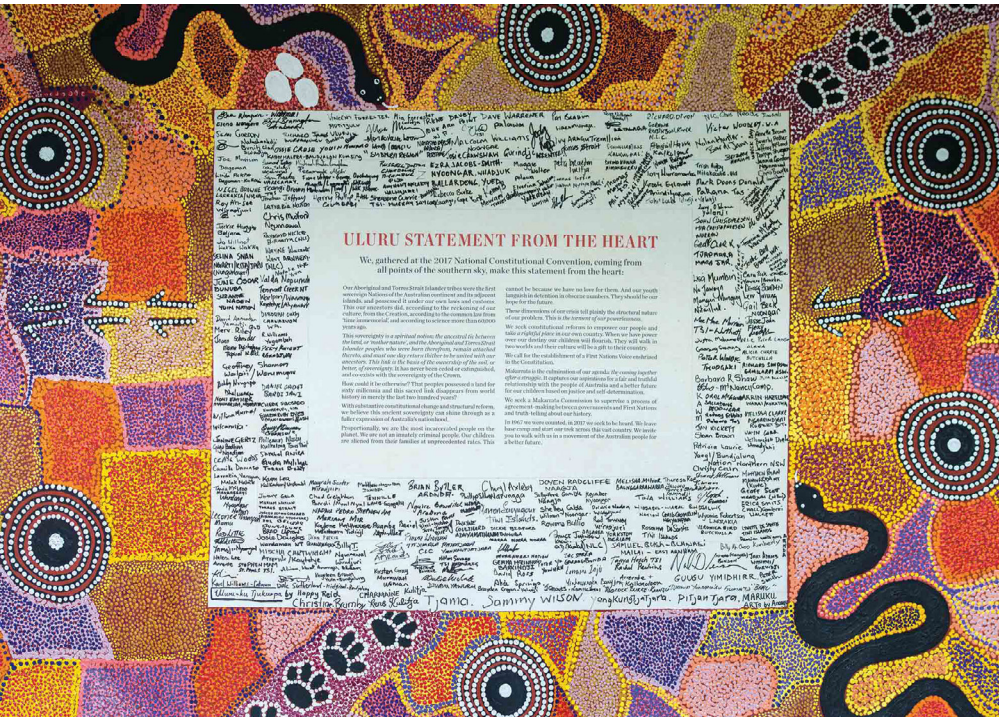
We remember them.

Ngiyana winangay ganunga.

November 2014

Source: <https://myallcreek.org/>

# The Uluru Statement



'The Uluru Statement from the heart' is a collective call from representatives of Indigenous nations across Australia for Aboriginal peoples to be constitutionally recognised.

Amendments to Australia's constitution can only be made by a referendum, a vote put to the people of Australia.

Without constitutional protection, current acts of Parliament that promote Indigenous rights, such as the Native Title Act, can be removed at the Parliaments' discretion.

## PRIMARY

### Discussion

- What does reconciliation mean, and how to we achieve it?
- How does the Myall Creek Memorial show reconciliation?
- How could we further reconciliation in Australia?

### Activity

Do a virtual tour of the Myall Creek memorial.

Virtual Tour of Myall Creek Memorial Walk:  
[vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/O/p/4](http://vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/O/p/4)

## SECONDARY

### Discussion

- What does reconciliation mean, and how to we achieve it?
- How is reconciliation conveyed generally between Indigenous and non-indigenous Australians today?
- How does the Myall Creek Memorial show reconciliation?
- How could we further reconciliation in Australia?

### Activity

Do a virtual tour of the Myall Creek memorial.

Virtual Tour of Myall Creek Memorial Walk:  
[vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/O/p/4](http://vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#!s/O/p/4)

# Myall Creek Resource Library

## Websites

[myallcreek.org](http://myallcreek.org)

[myallcreekmassacre.com](http://myallcreekmassacre.com)

[ulurustatement.org](http://ulurustatement.org)

AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia

[aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia](http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia)

[nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/myall-creek-massacre](http://nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/myall-creek-massacre)

[creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838](http://creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/myall-creek-massacre-1838)

## Articles

180th Anniversary , Myall Creek Memorial, June 2018

[abc.net.au/news/2018-06-10/myall-creek-massacre-memorial-a-symbol-of-reconciliation/9845158](http://abc.net.au/news/2018-06-10/myall-creek-massacre-memorial-a-symbol-of-reconciliation/9845158)

180th Anniversary, Myall Creek Memorial, One goal four perspectives, June 2018

[bingara.com.au/one-goal-four-perspectives](http://bingara.com.au/one-goal-four-perspectives)

180th Anniversary, Myall Creek Memorial Gathering Cloak June, 2018

[inverelltimes.com.au/story/5451912/stunning-myall-creek-gathering-cloak-created-by-elders-and-artists-for-180th-memorial/?cs=5923&fbclid=IwAR2mzDyIZ4RLeX1jgRt9KUuvKWdrq72Qh3kx3zsUF-RGzzRmrwclgGTWf2rw](http://inverelltimes.com.au/story/5451912/stunning-myall-creek-gathering-cloak-created-by-elders-and-artists-for-180th-memorial/?cs=5923&fbclid=IwAR2mzDyIZ4RLeX1jgRt9KUuvKWdrq72Qh3kx3zsUF-RGzzRmrwclgGTWf2rw)

180th Anniversary , Myall Creek Memorial, June 2018

[inverelltimes.com.au/story/5454430/myall-creek-commemoration-a-chance-for-renewed-reconciliation/?fbclid=IwAR2jAxR4\\_T8TExtaARgfHg puNBhQgHev2hxrm3K6PSixf8-MJf4ZbDNPA8k](http://inverelltimes.com.au/story/5454430/myall-creek-commemoration-a-chance-for-renewed-reconciliation/?fbclid=IwAR2jAxR4_T8TExtaARgfHg puNBhQgHev2hxrm3K6PSixf8-MJf4ZbDNPA8k)

## Readings

Introduction, Myall Creek and Beyond, Exhibition Curator, Bianca Beetson

Welcome to Country Worksheet

The Myall Creek Gathering Cloak Map, Carol McGregor with Adele Chapman-Burgess and the community of the Myall Creek Gathering Cloak

National Heritage List, Myall Creek Massacre and Memorial

The Myall Creek Massacre Its History, its memorial and the Opening Ceremony, Ted Stubbins and Paulette Smith

The Myall Creek Massacre by Len Payne

'A very bad business' Henry Dangar and the Myall Creek Massacre 1838, Lydall Ryan, University of Newcastle

Letter from J.H Bannatyne

## Activities

Acknowledgement of Country activity sheet

The characters of the Myall Creek story

## Interactive Resources

An interactive map of massacres in Australia:  
[theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/mar/04/massacre-map-australia-the-killing-times-frontier-wars](https://theguardian.com/australia-news/ng-interactive/2019/mar/04/massacre-map-australia-the-killing-times-frontier-wars)

Virtual Tour of Myall Creek Memorial:  
[vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#ls/0/p/4](http://vtility.net/virtualtour/W3uh7xpRNn#ls/0/p/4)

## Videos

Myall Creek and Beyond  
[youtu.be/t2forrlmgxA](https://youtu.be/t2forrlmgxA)

Massacre Recollections : Elder Stories of the Frontier Wars in FNQ  
[youtu.be/5rvYW5eaQZI](https://youtu.be/5rvYW5eaQZI)

Australian Story – Bridge Over Myall Creek (Myall Creek Massacre)  
[abccommercial.com/librarysales/program/australian-story-bridge-over-myall-creek-myall-creek-massacre](http://abccommercial.com/librarysales/program/australian-story-bridge-over-myall-creek-myall-creek-massacre)

Paul Keating – The Redfern Address- Australian Labor Party  
[youtu.be/hhqAFLud228](https://youtu.be/hhqAFLud228)

Impacts of intergenerational Trauma, The Healing Foundation  
[youtu.be/vlqx8EYvRbQ](https://youtu.be/vlqx8EYvRbQ)

## Podcast

Myall Creek massacre - M A D M E N podcast Episode 3  
[youtu.be/0Ziz03la7Xo](https://youtu.be/0Ziz03la7Xo)

Remembering the Myall Creek Massacre - Interview with Jane Lydon  
[youtu.be/H0d9C4adlcg](https://youtu.be/H0d9C4adlcg)



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